RAILROADS AND REAL ESTATE.

From the Philadelphia Public Ledger.

A man who bought 100 shares of Pennsylvania Railroad stock fifty years ago—say the first day of the battle of Gettysburg—paid approximately $6,000 for it. If he kept it until today, he would have received about 6 per cent on his money all that time, but his capital would now be only $5,690.

Had a man on the same day bought a piece of real estate for $6,000 in the central part of Philadelphia or in any direction around it or in almost any other thriving town, the increase in his capital now would be very great, in almost every case. I know a man who twenty-four years ago paid $30,000 for a Chestnut Street property and he recently refused $368,000 for it. His capital has multiplied by more than fifteen.

It is a curious thing that there is such a general impression that those who own railroads have grown rich with amazing rapidity. The truth is, as I have pointed out, that a dollar invested half a century ago in America's largest railroad and the one where traffic is densest and the people richest and where business has grown the fastest, is worth a little less than a dollar today. Similar comparisons might be made with the other standard lines of the East. Taking the average of all of them it will be seen that there has been little or no value added to any given amount of capital invested in them a generation or so ago.

It would appear from this that the railroads have not been getting too big a share of the country's progress.

FOREST COMMISSION'S WORK IS IMPORTANT

Forest Lands Are Being Acquired for the Protection of Watersheds of Navigable Streams.

Much of the most important work undertaken by the United States government is conducted practically in obscurity. And it is in all probability because of this fact that but little has been heard of the National Forest Reserve Commission despite the fact that it has been in existence more than two years, and that in that period it has accomplished astounding results.

There is perhaps no other government commission of scientific nature that has such a distinguished personnel, and in which the officials, notwithstanding their other manifold duties, take such a keen and direct interest, investing gladly their time and labor and thought.

The commission is composed of Secretary of War Garrison, Secretary of Agriculture Houston, Secretary of the Interior Lane, Senator Smith of Maryland, Senator Gallinger of New Hampshire, Representative Lee of Georgia, and Representative Hawley of Oregon.

Forest Lands Acquired.

The object of the commission is the acquisition of forest lands for the protection of the watersheds of navigable streams. The work of the body is being confined at present to the eastern section of the country, especially to the appalachian range and the White Mountains of New Hampshire.

Large tracts of territory at the sources of the navigable streams are being purchased, with the idea of protecting the waterways from the harmful effects of landslides, and also of guarding against forest fires that occur at the fountain heads of these streams so often, resulting in the drying up of the waters.

The scientific work in connection with the acquisition scheme is conducted by a special branch of the Forest Service, under the supervision of Assistant Forester William L. Hall and Forest Examiner Karl W. Woodward, both of this city. The Geological Survey also aids by making extensive surveys of the territories selected for acquisition.

The members of the commission have charge of the administrative phase of the work, but they have not been satisfied with attending merely to these duties, so, as a result of this attitude, numerous trips have been made by them to the various mountain districts for the purpose of looking over the field themselves.

The last trip was made about the first of June, when all three secretaries, accompanied by other members of the commission, left their duties at Washington to visit the mountains of North Carolina. For several weeks they roughed it in the wilds of the mountainous country, viewing the rapid little streams and wandering through the vast timberland. It was while on the Pisgah Mountain, in Haywood County, North Carolina, that Assistant Forester Hall snapped the picture of the members of the commission that is here shown.

A snapshot of some of the members of the commission, taken on Pisgah Mountain, in Haywood County, N. C. Reading from left to right—Representative Hawley of Oregon, Secretary of Agriculture Houston, Secretary of War Garrison, Secretary of the Interior Lane, and Representative Lee of Georgia.

Trip of Adventures.

There were many thrilling adventures, and one of the most notable is depicted in the adjoining cut. The three secretaries were fording the Davidson River in a carriage, when suddenly in midstream the cross tree broke, the horses breaking loose and leaving the vehicle in the midst of the rushing waters. Two of the Forest Service employes who were with the party pulled up their high rubber boots, and jumping into the river, finally succeeded in wheeling the carriage to shore. While the three distinguished occupants of the vehicle fretted over their serious predicament, Assistant Forester Hall calmly stood upon the pleasant bank of the stream and took a snap shot of the incident.

A breakdown in midstream while fording the Davidson River, in North Carolina. Those in the carriage, reading from left to right—Secretary of Agriculture Houston, Secretary of War Garrison, and Secretary of the Interior Lane.

During the two years that the commission has been in existence more than 60,000 acres of land have been purchased. Of this territory about 500,000 acres are in the Appalachian States—Virginia, West Virginia, North Carolina, Tennessee, and Georgia. The remaining 100,000 acres are located in the White Mountains of New Hampshire. The commission purposes eventually to acquire about 1,250,000 acres of forest land.

Although there had been much agitation since about the year 1900 with respect to the protection of the watersheds of the navigable streams, the bill providing for the creation of the commission was not enacted until March 1, 1911. The body was formed to serve until June 30, 1915, at which date the appropriation will expire. In all probability the existence of the commission will be prolonged indefinitely. The body is expending in the neighborhood of $2,000,000 annually for the furtherance of the important work.

Work Now Going on in Appalachian Range and the White Mountains, Later Will Be Extended.

A HUMAN EXCHANGE.

From the Toledo News-Bee.

A recent development is the placement bureau, designed to help school children to fit into appropriate niches in life. Its intention is fine and no doubt in time those who are running it will learn the way to be of large service. If only there were a placement bureau for grown-ups!

Across the way, on the top floor of a dingy store building, is a stuffy apartment. A woman lives there, an unusual woman. She keeps her little home as neat as wax. In each window are pots of flowers and ferns. She has a canary, too, to which she is most attentive. She spends hours, during intervals in her household work, tending to her little flower beds. The patience and loving care with which she mothers these growths would do credit to the most famous plant specialist in the world.

That woman is misplaced in the grimy attic of a downtown building. She ought to be living in a flower-trellised cottage in the country. What a splendid farm mistress she would make!

On many farms are querulous, fretful, discontented women who long for the "freedom" and the excitements of the city. In every city are scores of women like this admirable housekeeper across the way; women who would find joy in ministering to the duties of farm life and whose starved souls would expand in the wholesome out-of-doors.

If only there were means of exchange for these misplaced families! What a saving it would achieve in human values!

The Principal's Jest.

From Judge.

School-teacher—This new little boy who's crying so hard says his name is Mose.

Principal—Evidently an abbreviation of lachrymose.

BUILDING UNDER WATER BY BEAVERS

Ingenious Architects of Animal Land Use Nearest Materials to Dam Streams and Flood Their Homes—Several Generations Engaged on Some Operations.

Millions of beaver ponds graced America's wild gardens at the time the first settlers came. These ragged and poetic ponds varied in length from a few feet to one mile, and in area they were from 100 acres down to a miniature pond that half a dozen merry children might encircle. These ponds were formed by dams built by beavers, and the dams varied greatly in size and were made of poles variously combined with sticks, stones, trash, rushes, and earth.

In the Bad Lands of Dakota I saw two dams that were made of chunks of coal, writes Enos A. Mills, in his delightful volume, "In Beaver World." This material had caved from a near-by bluff. I have noticed a few that were constructed of cobble-stones. The waterfront of these dams was filled and covered with clay, and they were the work of "grass beavers"—beaver that subsist chiefly on grass, and that live in localities almost destitute of trees.

The shape and the material of a dam are dependent on a number of things; the nature of the place where built, the kind of materials available for its building, the purpose it is intended to serve, and the relation it may have to dams already constructed. Sometimes a small dam will be made—that will ultimately become a big one—by simply digging a ditch across the stream or basin and piling the excavated material into a dam.

Beaver, like men, are unequal in their skill, both in planning and in doing work, and the work of most beaver falls short of perfection. Errors are not uncommon. More than one colony has commenced a dam apparently without knowing that there was not sufficient available material to complete it. Others have built in the wrong places, and have thus failed to flood the area which they desired to reach or cover with water. Occasionally the difficulties of construction have been too great for the beaver who attempted it, and the dam has been abandoned in an incomplete state. Now and then a weak dam breaks, or a strong one is swept out by a flood.

Why They Do It.

But why do beavers need or want the pond which the dam affords? They need it for the purpose of maintaining water of sufficient depth and area to enable them to move about in safety, and to transport their food supplies with the greatest ease. Above all, the pond is a place of refuge, into which the beaver can constantly plunge and have security from his numerous and ever watchful enemies. The house entrance must be kept water covered. In the water the beaver is in his element. On the land he is a child lost in the wilds. He has extremely short legs and a heavy body. His make-up fits him for movement in the water. He is a graceful swimmer, and in the water can move easily and evade enemies; while on land he is an awkward lubber, moves slowly, and is easily overtaken. Water of sufficient depth and area, then, is essential to the life and happiness of the beaver. To have this at all times it is necessary, in localities where the supply at times is insufficient, to maintain it by means of dams and ponds.

Deep ponds are needed around the house; shallow ponds with shores in near-by groves facilitate far-away logging. Dams are placed across streams whose waters are to be led away through new channels and made to serve elsewhere in canals or ponds. Dams are made across inclined canals to catch and hold water in them. Streams are beaver's avenues of travel. Along shallow streams in a beaver country it is not uncommon to see an occasional short dam which forms a deep hole, which apparently is maintained as a harbor or place of safety into which traveling beaver may dive and be made safe from pursuit.

Installment Plan in Building.

Most beaver dams are built on the installment plan. They are the result of growth. The new dam is short and comparatively low. It is enlarged as conditions may require. As the trees in the edge of the pond are harvested, the dam is built higher and longer, so as to flood a larger area; or as sediment fills the pond, the dam is from time to time raised and lengthened in order to maintain the desired depth of water. Thus it may grow through the years until the possibilities of the locality are exhausted. The dam may then be abandoned. It may be used for a few years or it may be used for a century. A gigantic beaver dam may thus represent the work of several generations of beaver. It often occurs that one or more generations may use a dam and yearly add something to its size. By and by these beaver may die or emigrate. The old dam remains, falling to ruin in places. Years go by and other beaver come upon the scene. The old dam is then used for the foundation of a new one. The appearance of some old dams indicates that they have been repeatedly used and abandoned.

New dams, being made largely of course materials, appear very unlike old ones. Decay, settling, repairs, and other changes come rapidly. The dam is built of poles today; it speedily becomes earthy and is planted by nature to grass, willows, and flowers. On old, large dams it is not uncommon to see old forest trees. The roots of these entangle the constructive materials, penetrate deeply, and help to anchor securely the entire dam.

The longest beaver dam that I have ever seen or measured was on the Jefferson River, near Three Forks, Mont. This was 2,140 feet long. Most of it was old. More than half of it was less than 6 feet in height; two short sections of it, however, were 22 feet wide at the base, 5 on top, and 14 feet high.

The Kitchen Beautiful.

An English girl has adopted the profession of visiting cook, and will devote herself to teaching the indispensable art. She believes that "if kitchens were beautiful, and not the stuffy, stodgy dungeons that they so often are, and that if women dressed for their work in them with the care that they dress for a ball, cooking would no longer be regarded as drudgery and a monotonous business."

A PICTURE OF TILDEN.

(Col. Henry Watterson, in the Century Magazine.)

It would be hard to find a character farther from that of a subtle schemer—sitting behind his screen and pulling his wires—which his political and party enemies discovered him to be as soon as he began to get in the way of the machine and obstruct the march of the self-elect. His confidences were not effusive nor their subjects numerous. His deliberation was unfailing and sometimes it carried the idea of indecision, not to say actual love of procrastination.

But, in my experience with him, I found that he usually ended where he began, and it was nowise difficult for those whom he trusted to divine the bias of his mind where he thought it best to reserve its conclusions. I do not think that in any great affair he ever hesitated longer than the gravity of the case required of a prudent man, or that he had a preference for delays, or that he clung over-tenaciously to both horns of the dilemma, as his professional traning and instinct might lead him to do, and did certainly expose him to the accusation of doing.

He was a philosopher and took the world as he found it. He rarely complained and never inveighed. He had a discriminating way of balancing men's good and bad qualities, and of giving each the benefit of a generous accounting and a just way of expecting no more of a man than it was in him to yield. As he got into deeper water his stature rose to its level, and, from his exclusion from the Presidency in 1877 to his renunciation of public affairs in 1884, and his death in 1886, his walks and ways might have been a study for all who would learn life's truest lessons and know the real sources of honor, happiness, and fame.

City Woodcraft.

From the Kansas City Journal.

"What are you whooping about, there on the back porch?"

"Henry, you know I have joined the Girl Scouts."

"Well, what are you trying to do, imitate a moose?"

"That's our distress call for a cook."